

The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969



Making Music

The cast of "Rags" rehearses for the high school musical.

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Students create ATHENA Quizbowl competition

The newly established competition promotes female participation and empowerment.

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Volume LVIV Issue V—April 2017

Chen, conductor, substitutes for Jayson

■ Talia Blatt
Emily Chen
Staff Writers

Arthur Chen is a man of multitudes. He loves mint chocolate chip ice cream, the color blue and hails from New Zealand. Chen studied mathematics as an undergraduate and enjoys the sciences. He likes to sing and challenge himself, but more than anything, Chen loves to teach music.

Chen teaches Symphony Orchestra, Mixtape Anatomy, Music Theory and co-teaches the Repertoire Orchestra at Lexington High School.

"I really like him! He's really fun and like, outgoing. He gives good feedback after we play. He always has a good way to phrase things, and makes sure that we can understand what he's saying about the music," Anna Maffa, a sophomore who plays violin in Symphony Orchestra, said.

Growing up as a Christian, Chen went to a very traditional church. There, he was surrounded by old-school church music, primarily played with the organ and

the piano. Chen later transferred to a new church, which practiced more pop music. The wife of his new pastor taught him how to read music, chord charts and play in a band. Despite his love for music, however, Chen's parents wanted him to be an engineer.

"I had the grades for it — I loved math. I enjoyed chemistry and physics and all of that, but it was my high school teacher that inspired me to become a teacher. And so I picked two subjects that I wanted to at least approach teaching: mathematics and music," Chen said.

That teacher was Tagaloa Peter Su'a. Su'a was an important person in his high school community who managed to make his students feel just as important, no matter how many students he had. This inspired Chen to teach as well.

Chen studied at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, before transferring to the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied music education.

"It's really exciting to find ways to compare the two different subject, even just the philosophies around the

classrooms, and to integrate both of them and apply those to students of minority, who might tend to do a bit more of one subject more than the other," Chen said.

Chen originally taught at Marlborough. He has also built a musical presence in Massachusetts teaching piano, singing in two choirs with Follen Church and singing with an ensemble in Boston called the Seraphim Singers, a sacred choral music group.

Chen has a packed schedule. However, when he can, Chen enjoys going to museums and hiking. His favorite hiking location nearby is Mount Major in New Hampshire. He also likes the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art.

"It's a nice way to get away from the fast pace of life. I think Wednesday nights are the only weeknights that I can have to myself. I'm not scheduled with a bunch of other things. So then, I can take two or three hours and go to a museum, and just not think about what's coming up next," Chen said.

While Chen enjoys his life here in America, he constantly thinks of his home, New Zealand. He misses the



Staff photo by Emily Chen

Arthur Chen is a substitute teacher for Jayson's class.

beaches and knowing a city from the inside out. Most of all, Chen misses his family, friends and his mom's Taiwanese cooking. He plans to return this summer though, where he will meet his two-year-old niece and see friends

and family for the first time in three years.

Other future plans include graduate school at the University of British Columbia, where Chen will cross-study teaching mathematics and music.

Pura Vida Benefit Concert fundraises for Latin American countries

■ Lara Bursal
Emily Ma
Staff Writers

The hall of Follen Church in Lexington was full of a blend of different sounds on March 17. From the harmonies of multiple a cappella groups to a flute solo, the fifth annual Pura Vida Benefit Concert had it all.

The Pura Vida Project is a charity organization at Lexington High School. The group, founded nearly six years ago by several eighth

graders who were inspired by the Costa Rica school trip, raises money and awareness for Latin American charities.

"The concert is our biggest event. We take different musical styles and groups from LHS and put them together," Maeve Wiesen, a senior and co-chair of the charity, said.

The Pura Vida Project is completely run by students. There are no adult supervisors to help with the work, so the students bear the full responsibility of organizing, planning and putting the events into action.

"It's just us," Wiesen said. "It's all our responsibility, which can be scary, but rewarding ... it feels that much more accomplishing."

This year, the benefit concert raised money and awareness for the Salvadorian American Humanitarian Foundation. The organization aims to provide students with a fresh perspective about what life is like for people in other parts of the world. It also give LHS students a chance to help others in a fun and engaging way.

"It raises awareness of the

poverty that is within Latin American countries, and especially how that can affect children ... I think it's a great way for LHS students to recognize how different our lives could have been, if we had been born somewhere else in the world," Yoojee Kim, a sophomore and the co-planner of this year's concert, said.

The Pura Vida benefit concert not only aided people in need but also provided a joyful experience for the audience, performers and planners alike.

"Singing with my friends in general is a lot of fun," Rohan Purandare, a freshman and PB&J member, said. "[The concert] benefits the people who need money as well as the students who participate."

"My favorite part of these concerts is the fact that so many high school musicians are willing to give up their Friday night in order to volunteer their time and talent for a cause that is so unrelated to their direct daily lives," Kim said. "It's so nice to see."

Editorial

The new LHS finals schedule causes more stress and issues instead of mending problems.

Lexington High School has recently installed a new schedule for finals week this year. Rather than having multiple final exams each day separated by two hour breaks, the new schedule has each exam scheduled for 8:00 to 9:30 a.m., followed by a free block and then classes from 10:27 a.m. to 2:25 p.m.

In previous years, students have used the two-hour breaks in between finals everyday to de-stress. The two hour break was seen as a short period of freedom as it gave students an opportunity to interact with nature and detach from the academic environment before some of the most important exams of the year.

With this new schedule, [LHS] takes away the fun from finals week and just give us more work to do right after a two-hour test," Aditya Kodangattil, a junior, said.

One of the few downsides to the old schedule was its reliance on student responsibility in high pressure situations. Because there were two finals everyday, students had to find balance preparing for both. Prepared or not, students faced the daunting task of taking two finals in one day, an inevitably stressful situation.

Though having only one final exam each day helps the school's longtime goal of reducing stress, the classes after each exam serve little purpose other than fulfilling the required number of yearly ac-

ademic hours. They could be used as productive study time for imminent exams, but — as with every year — there are already two full review days dedicated to this.

"[The new final schedule] spreads out the finals and wastes school days that could have been used for learning before the finals," Madelyn Andersen, a junior, said. "I think that the new finals schedule wastes a lot of class time because we are not going to be learning anything during the classes after the finals."

It would be much more beneficial for students to leave campus following each exam, instead of having semi-structured classes that will likely be spent chatting with friends in an unorganized "studying" environment. The last day of school already offers plenty of time to return final exams and say goodbyes to teachers; this new schedule only serves to increase the number of virtually aimless classes, dragging out the last week of school.

"I just like getting [the finals] done with," Kevin Lu, a junior, said. "The old finals week was not that stressful and I don't know why they felt the need to change it."

While there is no perfect final exam schedule, the one in previous years seemed to have been accepted by students with few complaints, so there was little reason for change.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of the majority of the editorial board.

WORST PROM STORY?

"So the worst prom experience that I've seen, not my own prom from when I was in high school? It was one that I saw when I was chaperoning for Lexington, probably like 10 to 15 years ago. We had a student who came inebriated and he actually vomited on the superintendent upon entering the premises. He was sent home but his date, very sniffily, went in without him and apparently had a good time without him." — Lawrence David

To read more from Stacy McFadden and Samantha St. Lawrence, go to lexmusket.com

Prom is not as stressful as it's seen to be

Eunice Kim
Jennifer Lo
Staff Writers

With all the stress from SATs, grades and the college application process, prom seems like it should be more of an afterthought. That's hardly the case for this year. With the constant posts on the prom dress and tuxedo Facebook groups, it appears that the majority of the Class of 2018 has already begun buying formal wear and planning for the big night on May 13.

There's a lot to consider for the average prom attendee, from the outfit to the tickets to the prom date. The massive prom industry is there to prove it. In the months leading up the glorified tradition, prom labels like Sherri's Hill and Lulu's dominate teen magazines and social media platforms with the sole purpose of selling dresses to teenage girls.

However, contrary to the generalized perception, prom

at LHS seems to be a relatively stress-free event.

"I almost wore sweatpants last year but being in that atmosphere with your grade and your friends is a lot of fun and I'll always remember prom as a good memory," Nadia Ilaj, a junior who attended the 2016 junior prom, said.

Ilaj went to prom last year with her boyfriend. She stresses that prom differs from expectations in that it has an inclusive atmosphere. Other attendees expressed a similar perspective.

"I didn't do much to get ready for prom, just buying a dress and looking forward at what hairstyle I wanted for the actual day," Megan Connors, a current LHS junior who went to senior prom in 2016, said.

Even though LHS prom seems to have a relaxed environment that doesn't put much weight in preparation, there are still some positive aspects to the so-called prom craze.

Since prom is often a tradi-

tion that has been experienced by families and friends alike, experiences such as shopping and getting ready together can be fun to share. Many people enjoy assisting with prom preparations, which can become a memory as distinct as the prom night itself.

The prom tradition, which has long been a symbol of American adolescence, has prevailed within our school system. We have established a history of having both a junior and a senior prom, which gives many the opportunity to attend prom. Many students have valued those experiences because it comes along with treasured memories.

Students look forward to the fun promposals, shopping with friends and continuing a beloved tradition. For some, prom is just about having fun and celebrating the end of the school year. Even though students may find prom preparations overbearing, the memories might just be worth the effort.

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Math class teaches logical thinking and improves reasoning skills for students

■ Evan Fong
Columnist

Math class is a unique course here at Lexington High School in that it is a “core” course which some students do not feel needs to be taught. We need history class to learn about our past to prevent ourselves from committing the same mistakes. We need English class to learn how to extract meaning from words and to communicate ideas effectively. We need science to learn how the world around us works. But where is the need for math? We don’t need to learn how to do arithmetic, we already have computers and calculators for that. And when are we ever going to apply the graph of the sine function to anything in real life?

Actually, we need math class to learn how to solve problems and develop logic and reasoning skills, though some probably just aren’t very aware of this fact. In order to solve a question on a math test, a student is required to use many skills learned throughout the course of a chapter, as well as a little bit of their own imagination and creativity. Math requires the student to figure out “what have I seen in the past that would be applicable to this

problem” and to make educated guesses towards the solution, until it finally becomes clear how the problem should be solved.

But this isn’t how math class is viewed by most students. Rather, math tests become all about memorizing past problems and hoping that a very similar problem will appear on the test. Indeed, some teachers put past homework problems onto their quizzes and tests, which encourages rote memorization over a deeper understanding of the techniques and relationships between problems. This effectively results in teaching “painting by numbers,” forcing connections rather than having students develop intuition on their own.

Learning through rote memorization occurs as a consequence of teaching a large mass of students. It’s easier to teach students to memorize certain problems and strategies rather than have them understand them. But if such a habit continues, math class really does become useless and a waste of time. It is arguable that it is even detrimental, as it destroys a student’s natural intuition and curiosity for math.

It is not a small task to change such a large system, but good methods would focus on exposing the the mer-

its of mathematics: collaboration and beautiful results. Some teachers enjoy going on related tangents that aren’t directly related to the course in order to try to display the relationships in math and its connections to the world. Others may also try providing more interesting challenge problems which require extra thinking to solve.

The easiest way, perhaps, is to make math classes more interactive. English classes are often filled with discussion and encourage students to come to conclusions based on their mind and the text. In a similar way, a math teacher can propose a problem and have the students work on it together, and later have them propose their own solutions to solve it. Or maybe students can have a heated debate about whether or not $0.99999\ldots$ is truly equal to one. Just as writing English papers is a creative process, so is solving math problems. Exposing this would be potentially enjoyable to students.

There doesn’t exist a single perfect method in forming a perfect math class, just as there is no one perfect method to solving a math problem. Perhaps most important, though, is to truly convey the fact that no perfect method exists to the students themselves.

Niche ranking may be dubious

■ Jessica Karson
Alexa Christ
Staff Writers

Lexington High School received yet another A+ on its transcript, given by Niche.com, a reputable school evaluating website. The website grades public high school based on various aspects such as college-readiness, diversity, academics and sports.

Treated like classes, individual categories received letter grades as well. Among other areas, LHS received an A+ in the “Health and Safety” category which took into account chronic student absenteeism, expulsions and suspensions, as well as student and parent responses.

While students may generally have good attendance and behavior, Niche’s grading for “Health and Safety” does not account for the mental health of students. Factors that should be taken into consideration are family pressure, the competition and student stress levels.

“One of [our issues] has to do with an unhealthy level of stress sometimes and that wouldn’t be true of every school but I think for us it’s definitely something that’s important,” Maureen Haviland, a mythology and Latin teacher at LHS, said.

To support the A+ health and safety rating, the site used a poll that asks if people like

their school. LHS got the result that 80% of the people feel that they are content at their school.

There are many aspects that could contribute to a happiness at LHS. The happiness and satisfaction described is a broad concept and can be interpreted in different ways.

“I think being with the people at LHS makes [students] happy,” Sandhya Vellayappan, a sophomore, said.

Although student and parent responses are important and should be taken into consideration, the amount of responses proves to be insufficient in representing the whole student population. With over 2,000 students in LHS, 25 responses only shows a small fraction of the feelings of students here.

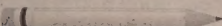
Moreover, these types of ranking websites are used by parents across the nation to choose school districts.

“As a mom I looked at [school evaluating websites] and what I realized is that what I wanted was some sort of rating system that would say ... what would be the best outcome for [my daughter],” Haviland said.

Because parents rely on these websites to make informed decisions, categories that reflect their concerns for their child should be included. In order for these websites to be most accurate, the categories like health and safety should be refined.

How should seniors react to their college admissions decisions?

collegebored



■ Yuhang Zhang
Columnist

As winter blew into spring we entered the forlorn month of March. It’s the last full month of school for seniors, and what a long month it was. Aside from one half-day, there is no respite from school — no snow days to pray for (although we were lucky to get a few), nor any holidays for famous birthdays. Indeed, this month seems to spur teachers into a frenzy — as noble educators, they feel a duty, blossoming from deep within, to ingrain their seniors with huge amounts of encyclopedic knowledge, despite graduation being just a breath away.

And so the relentless march

of agony continues.

But to those in the know, this month is much more — it is the month of decisions. Most college decisions, those unpredictable beasts of fortune, come out all throughout March. And with them comes a chain of tears and celebrations, regret and satisfaction, comparisons of financial aid and, eventually, decisions on where to go, on what to do. And for once, you are the master of your future.

Yet, the decision that’s most on our minds isn’t that final one that we make, but that of an admissions officer. No one knows what awaits, and although it’s more than just a bit frightening, it’s relief that will cloud your mind — whether the exuberance of acceptance or finality of rejection, the arrival of the decision is a relief from the waiting game. Which brings me to the topic of this column.

The grueling period before decisions are released — well, it can be tough to handle. For the patient, it may only seem boring, but to the anxious, waiting can feel worse than rejection (personal experience). There will be those hours of wonder, of what your school colors will be, or of what you’ll do if everyone rejects you. Or of just simple unrest — making entire playlists for each possible scenario, or checking your dream school’s web portal over, and over, and over, hitting that refresh button like a nervous tick, until just typing a single letter into your browser brings the page up.

So, in the face of this monumental wait, what to do? I may seem hopelessly unqualified to advise here. After all, panic and impatience are my greatest (some say only) talents. However, there are a few mental tricks, cheats perhaps,

that you may find a use for.

1. Prepare to let it all go. That’s right, let “It” go, “It” being that one school, the one that you’ve planned your entire journey out for, that you stalked throughout all facets of social media and whose name you can’t say out loud for fear of jinxing your chances. Here’s my take on it (unduly pessimistic, perhaps): trick your anxiety, by fiercely imagining how you’ll react to a rejection. Go through every detail in your mind, from the first person you’ll text (which sad emoji will you use, or perhaps a /), to the comfort food you’ll eat. And after imagining all that, well, imagine the next morning. And this time, be sure to add a sun into your imagination, shining brightly. Remember that time goes on, and you will be happy wherever you end up.

2. Talk. To the sky, to friends, even to College-

Confidential (guilty). Every gram of anxiety you let out is a pound of stress lost. And don’t just talk to that one friend who’s personality is literally “xD :/!!!”; mix it up. After all, the more pessimistic your stress-talking partner is, the more optimistic you feel in comparison.

3. Put everything in context. Sometimes, looking at the rest of the world, whether in the past, through many other countries or even in our own, we stand at the precipice of almost boundless opportunities and success. It isn’t so much about guiltily yourself, but recognizing that even the worst-case scenario won’t doom you for life will help put the situation into context.

And next time when we meet, homework and long nights of studying will hopefully be but distant nightmares, left to drown in the past.

Detective Hankins collaborates with LPS and LPD to support students

■ Shweta Kondapi
William Zen
Staff Writers

There has been much ado about something — or someone — lately. Many students have reported seeing a detective on school grounds and have questioned her role at Lexington High School. Contrary to many assumptions some might make, Detective Kristina Hankins is the School Resource Officer (SRO).

Her job is to work with the principals of all the schools in Lexington to enforce laws as well as to support the students. She is the bridge between the nine Lexington Public Schools and the Lexington Police Department, “trying to be a visible, friendly face,” Laura Lasa, principal of LHS, said. Hankins’ role is to make it easier for people to communicate with the police, as well as disbanding the stereotype of the police being people to be viewed as frightening.

“Many districts do not have an SRO,” Lasa said. “[Hankins] is very proactive, as she knows a lot of people, being a graduate of LHS herself.”

Along with making herself visible in general (she is often seen in the Quad and Commons), Hankins is the assistant coach of the girls ice hockey team. During February vacation, she ran a camp that brought law enforcement officers as well as professionals in similar fields to show students the various career options that were open to them.

The School Resource Officer also goes to court on behalf of the schools, and can be seen as somewhat of a representative or as a neutral party.

Although SROs may be thought of as dealing with criminal activities, this is almost never the case. Generally, an SRO’s average day includes helping schools and students with advice, representing the police in meetings and convening with parents and fixing minor issues, such as student absences, Hankins said.

However, if there was any illegal activity, it would be the officer’s duty to report it to the police department, who would then look into it. Detective Jeff Chaisson, the previous SRO, also said that the SRO will take over cases involving juveniles after a patrolman does the preliminary report.

Hankins has been substituting for Chaisson as SRO since Oct. 30, 2016, after Chaisson was injured; Hankins was a patrolwoman before becoming the SRO. When Chaisson returns, Hankins may still be able to remain an SRO and share the position with him for the LPS. This has been discussed for a while but could not be done due to limited funds, Hankins said.

“We’re in a position now that, obviously something unfortunate happened, Jeff [Chaisson] was injured, but this could set the ball in motion where we’ll get the two that we’ve been looking for for a while,” Hankins said.

Currently there is one SRO working for the nine public schools in Lexington,

the Minuteman Career and Technical High School and rare call-ins from Lexington Christian Academy.

“I’m probably backlogged now; I’m up-to-date with my investigations and keeping up with them, but there are some reports that are done I just haven’t got a chance to type them up. I’m probably 10 or 12 reports deep. They’re done, the investigation is complete, I actually just need to find time to type them up,” Hankins said. Chaisson said this was pretty normal.

Minuteman Tech is also looking to get their own SRO. The SROs are also trying to get their own office at LHS.

“It’s always good as far as student interaction knowing that if a student needs to come talk to us, they have that option, that they can find us in our office,” Hankins said.

“Most schools that I know of, the SRO has an office at the high school and that’s actually where they report to and from every day, they go right to the high school. It makes the interaction with the students much easier, follow-

ing up on cases and administration at the school needs to find you or something were going on they could just immediately come to your office, it just makes, given an emergency, response a lot easier,” Hankins said.

“It just helps, and you get to know the kids a lot better, being here, having your face in the hallways every day, having those interactions and even positive relations with the students, not just them coming to you when there’s an issue, but knowing they can if an issue does arise, building that rapport.”

Chaisson said SROs would have an open-door policy for their LHS office.

Hankins said when the SRO visits an elementary school, “it’s awesome when the kids are in the hallways: one kid will give you a high five and then it starts the whole chain behind them. You’ll just have your hand up with every kid that passes,” Chaisson said. “You’ll get about 500 high fives walking down the hallway. And they’ve got a million questions too.”

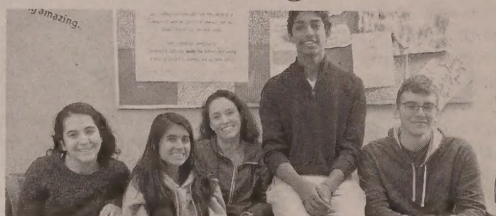
StoryCorps presented during I Block

■ Isha Jha
Avani Kabra
Staff Writers

Before last Thanksgiving, the Sources of Strength club started a project at Lexington High School called StoryCorps, which aims to show the power of storytelling in the community. On Nov. 21, 2016, students came into the Rock Room during lunch, study halls and frees, to tell a story by themselves or with a group. On March 30, the members presented the final product of StoryCorps at the Library Media Center during I Block. This included a viewing of a variety of stories followed by a quick debrief.

“In my view, this project is about creating a space for students to communicate with each other and share stories that we might not usually hear and to explore our humanity more. If we create a space for people to share their struggles, we will be able to make connections from that, or at least feel less alone,” Krista Cardellicchio, the LHS Humanities Academic Support Teacher and faculty adviser for StoryCorps, said.

“At LHS, there is a culture of reservation which makes



Staff photo by Eunice Kim
Members of Sources of Strength. Left to right: Mona Tavangar, Avani Kabra, Candela de Amorrtortu, Aman Saiju and Ido Diamant.

us not share things with each other and instead, we quietly suffer. I think this project shows that even with these simple stories, you can find something to relate to, which can lift up your day or make you think about something differently,” Mona Tavangar, a junior at LHS and Sources of Strength member, said.

The stories covered a variety of subjects, ranging from people’s experiences moving to Lexington, to funny anecdotes about family incidents and then to more serious topics, such as battling depression and experiencing the Boston Marathon terrorist attacks.

“For me, the best part of the project was getting to hear stories from people that I see on a regular basis and learning something new about them. It was really interesting to hear people talk about their

experiences on such a personal level, which is something we don’t get to do a lot here at LHS, since everyone is so busy all the time,” Rachel Harvey, a sophomore Sources of Strength member, said.

Once all the stories were recorded, the StoryCorps team started the process of editing them. These edits were based mostly on sound quality. The members also added visuals to accompany the stories so they could be played like short films.

“It’s been interesting listening to the stories multiple times because you get something different out of it new time,” Tavangar said. Members listened to these stories and strategized ways to best present them in order to both preserve the genuinity of the story while still keeping it easy for viewers to understand.

“I truly felt inspired after hearing so many of my peers share their stories, whether they ranged from happy ones to sad ones. I believe they left an important impact on us as a group and on the many students who got the chance to listen.”

— Candela de Amorrtortu, sophomore

“The StoryCorps project was/is definitely one of the highlights of my year. Physically illustrating stories my peers shared, and seeing those people’s reactions to my art, was extremely rewarding. The response to these stories was something I (and the rest of the project crew) couldn’t ever have imagined — our viewers showed an incredible amount of enthusiasm and empathy. Best of all, in the process I made some awesome new friends who I might’ve never had the opportunity to be friends with if it hadn’t been for StoryCorps.”

— Julia Kan, junior

“StoryCorps was one of the most fun and honestly greatest experiences I have had. It felt amazing to see the results of it and it will feel even better to see it going forward during my time at LHS.”

— Aman Saiju, sophomore

Complete Streets policy makes Lexington roads more accessible for all

■ Jeffrey Gu
Pranathi Srirangam
Staff Writers

On Feb. 22, Lexington's selectmen endorsed the Complete Streets policy, ensuring streets that are safe for all types of transportation are coming to Lexington.

The Complete Streets program is designed to make streets accessible to all, transitioning community roads from being solely for cars to being open to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

"Complete Streets is a relatively new concept that en-

hances public safety by taking into account the needs of all roadway users when maintaining or constructing new roads, transit facilities, and pathways," Michelle Ciccolo, a selectman, wrote in an email.

"By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation," according to the website of the National Complete Streets Coalition.

"The policy is helping us re-frame our priorities and approach to how we maintain and enhance our transportation network. It is enabling us to place a higher priority on bicycle and pedestrian safety," Ciccolo said.

Lexington is not alone in making this change. The National Complete Streets Coalition webpage states that over 1,060 agencies across the nation have adopted similar policies, all based on the program put forward by the National Complete Streets Coalition.

"There will be less of an emphasis on car-focused pol-

icies and new roadway features and reconstruction projects will focus less on vehicle congestion ... we may, in some instances, design for slower roadway speeds to increase safety of all users," Ciccolo said.

The Complete Streets strategies can enhance safety for students too. "When there's roads with no sidewalks, we have to make sure that we are not in the way of the cars. Hopefully, this program will change that," Anthony Mabardy, an LHS freshman, said.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation,

or MassDOT, has also endorsed the program, offering funding and support to towns that can prove that they meet state requirements, Lexington included.

"In addition, Massachusetts now has a grant incentive program for municipalities that pass policies and undertake planning around Complete Streets ... We recently obtained a grant for \$292,000 to advance our Complete Streets program here in Lexington," Ciccolo said.

"It will make Lexington's streets more safe, and runners will be more relaxed," Mabardy said.

New School Committee members voice their opinions on stress and space at LPS

■ Talia Blatt
Emily Chen
Staff Writers

Lexington held its annual town election on March 6. In addition to positions on the Housing Authority, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, two seats were available on the School Committee. Kathleen Lenihan won the one-year spot, while Kathryn Colburn won the three-year School Committee term.

Lenihan has volunteered for years in town and attended many School Committee meetings as an involved citizen. She wants to focus on a couple core issues during her one year term, particularly overcrowding.

"There's been a continuing and sustained increase in enrollment, and we've been adding space... but we still have more space that needs to be added," Lenihan said.

However, building projects require debt exclusions.

"When the town goes to build a very expensive project, they borrow the money for it. When you borrow money, you have to get the town to approve it, and we're gonna have to have a vote for that," Lenihan said.

Lenihan also wants to tackle stress, with an emphasis on later school start times, the pedagogy surrounding MCAS in elementary schools and the LHS science curriculum.

"The way we approach science at LHS is a particularly stressful way to go about doing it... we ask students to take an AP class without having an introductory year, which is not standard," Lenihan said.

She is concerned that elementary school students are too anxious about MCAS.

"I'd like to look at perhaps a pilot program where we prepare kids to take the MCAS in elementary school, but we don't tell them we're preparing them. Then, there's nothing to get stressed or anxious about," Lenihan said.

Colburn has volunteered for years in Lexington on the PTO and PTA. Colburn ran for Town Meeting and was appointed to the appropriation committee in 2015, serving as liaison to the School Committee. After witnessing the school capital projects and finances handled by the School Committee, Colburn said she pinpointed issues, and decided to run for School Committee herself.

Similar to Lenihan, Colburn prioritizes the overcrowding issue.

"We have a sixth grade and a seventh grade class that have over six hundred kids in them, so it's going to get worse before it gets better," Colburn said.

Colburn is also concerned about stress at LHS. She wants to move towards project-based learning, rather than a test-based grading sys-

tem.

"This would not only reduce the unhealthy stress, but also kind of raise academic engagement. That's the sweet spot I hope we can find, or at least work towards," Colburn said.

Colburn is a big supporter of the METCO program and wants to promote more diversity throughout the school system. On METCO student involvement, Colburn said she plans to speak with state legislators and METCO parents on topics such as transportation barriers to after-school activity participation.

Krishna Suraj, an LHS senior who voted, was particularly skeptical about many anti-stress efforts, especially those coming from town officials.

"I don't see how the anti-stress campaigns in their current state can be successful while maintaining the high standards ... for learning at LHS," Suraj said.

Maevie Wiesen, an LHS senior and Lenihan's daughter, also voted in the town elections. Wiesen expressed excitement over her mother's new position on the School Committee.

"She's always telling me about what we need to fix and how to do it, and now she actually gets to implement her ideas on a large scale instead of just telling me about it in our kitchen... I'm confident that she's going to do a great job," Wiesen said.

ATHENA encourages female empowerment



Staff photo by Shweta Kondapi
Left to right: Talia Blatt and Megha Prasad.

■ Nikki Kim
Olivia Kormos
Staff Writers

Members of the Girls in Quiz Bowl Committee organized and held ATHENA, a local quizbowl tournament hosted by Lexington High School, on April 1. Unlike at traditional tournaments, some of the questions for the tournament were especially written to highlight and support the empowerment and accomplishments of women.

ATHENA was open to students of all genders although females are encouraged to participate. In a round of quiz bowl, there are 20 tossups with bonuses. On tossups, either team can buzz in and answer. The team that gets the tossup gets a bonus, which contains three parts worth 10 points each. Team members can confer with each other on their bonuses, though not on tossups.

Unlike traditional quiz bowl tournaments, ATHENA had some questions focused primarily on female

accomplishments. For example, computational math was replaced with questions about women's contributions to fields such as history, science and religion, according to Nick Rommel, LHS sophomore and vice president of the LHS Quiz Bowl team.

When an individual buzzes in and gives the wrong answer during a question, he or she loses 5 points and locks his or her team out for the rest of the question. Negging is a bigger deal for girls while it is laughed off when boys make the same mistake, according to Megha Prasad, a member of the Girls in Quiz Bowl Committee and an LHS sophomore and Quiz Bowl vice president.

"We're ... hoping that by having more female inclusive questions we can make the community as a whole more welcoming," Prasad said.

The initiative started in 2016 when some of the girls on the LHS Quiz Bowl team as well as those from other local teams noticed how questions tended to be male-oriented and wanted to create a change.

"Hopefully ATHENA will show not only girls, but everyone, that memory-based activities like quiz bowl aren't just for boys ... Many girls leave quiz bowl because they don't feel accepted, and hopefully the tournament will provide them an opportunity to feel more accepted," Rommel said.

LHS musical 'Rags' reveals realities that immigrants face in America

■ Jake Kanef
Lily Lawrence
Staff Writers

Lexington High School's musical "Rags" will be performed on May 4, 5 and 6. "Rags" reveals the harsh realities that immigrants face as they settle in America.

The show features a young Russian mother named Rebecca and her young son trying to find her husband and escape anti-Semitism in Russia. While traveling, she also meets another immigrant girl named Bella and her father, Avram.

"The musical follows their experiences adjusting to American life in New York City. This includes dealing with sweatshops, unions and street peddlers as well as love, loss and death," Mona Tavan-



Staff photo by Kelly Hui

The director of "Rags," Katherine Bromley, gives instructions as Jongtae Jeon, Madelyn Lane, Emma Hagan, William Pullen and Danielle Kerr listen on during a rehearsal.

gar, a junior who plays Bella, wrote in an email.

The cast is made up of 34 other students and also includes music performed by the LHS Pit Orchestra and an on-stage musical group.

"Working with all of these wonderful musicians is an

amazing opportunity. Having Jeffrey Leonard as a conductor is a phenomenal experience, and especially this year, it means so much to work with him. The music of 'Rags' is fun, exciting and emotional and with some of the best musicians and singers in the school. It is an honor to play in the Pit Orchestra," Noah Jacobson, a junior, said.

As for the audition process, students had different thoughts.

"[The] audition process was fairly low-key," Molly Zeytoonian, a freshman, said.

Others found the process quite stressful.

"The preliminary audition is super stressful. You walk into the black box and all of a sudden five people are sitting

in front of you, and watching your every move, as you're by yourself in front of them. And all of the work you put in is to be evaluated solely on whatever you do in the next ten minutes," Trevor James, a junior who plays Avram Cohen, said.

Once the actors and actresses are cast, the musical begins to take shape with the initial staging process, which can move slowly toward the beginning of the long rehearsal schedule.

"The rehearsal schedule is pretty intense — usually two to three hours every day. It takes a lot of patience to get through the initial staging of the show," Tavangar said.

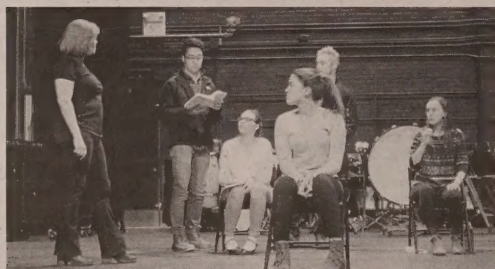
James expressed a similar sentiment. "You put in long

hours, and while they're putting together a big number you have to be silent while they arrange everyone on stage. Oftentimes it feels like more waiting than doing. The actual doing is super fun, but while you're waiting for them to arrange everyone else, it can be hard in such a long rehearsal."

James appreciates the sense of camaraderie among the actors.

"We're a pretty tight knit group among the actors, and returning actors tend to be friendly with and have an appreciation for the work of the techies and the costume people," James said.

Tickets to "Rags" will be sold in mid April at lunches and online.



Staff photo by Kelly Hui

The director, Katherine Bromley, giving instructions as Jongtae Jeon, Madelyn Lane, Emma Hagan, William Pullen and Danielle Kerr listen during a rehearsal of Rags.

Jeffrey Leonard, performing arts coordinator, retires after 35 years

■ Isha Jha
Avani Kabra
Staff Writers

As the coordinator of performing arts and the conductor of Lexington High School's Wind Ensemble, Jeffrey Leonard played a substantial role in the development of the Lexington performing arts program. Leonard is the administrative supervisor for all of the music and drama teachers in the town of Lexington. Under his baton, the Wind Ensemble won many honors and performed at various locations around the world.

Leonard began as a student-teacher in 1982, and then became Director of Bands and the Jazz Program in 1983. Eventually, he became the coordinator of performing arts in 2009. After 35 years of involvement in the music community, Leonard will be retiring at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Finding a replacement for Leonard has been an exten-

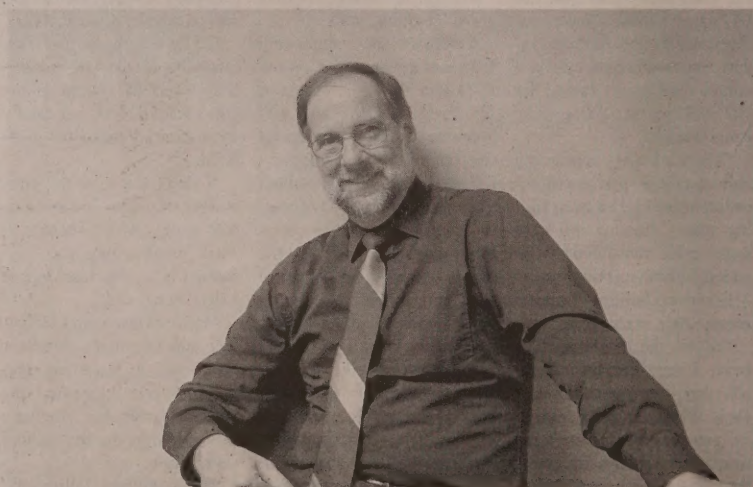
sive and challenging task. His students respect and appreciate his passion for teaching music, a trait that can be difficult to find.

"He's been amazing. He has such a presence in the room. The way he conducts, the way he has so much compassion for all of his students, the way inspires his students to go above and beyond their capabilities," Mina Lee, a sophomore in Wind Ensemble, said.

Leonard tries to ensure that any student who desires to play music in the Lexington Public Schools has the opportunity.

"In freshman year, I was new to Lexington and ... I was unable to get the courses I wanted, specifically band. Mr. Leonard went out of his way to help get me in the class," Roma Pathak, a junior in the Concert Band, said.

The town has organized a committee of teachers and residents to find the most fitting replacement for Leonard. The committee held a preliminary round of interviews for



Staff photo by Adi Gava

Jeffrey Leonard will retire at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

the position on March 17 and then an additional round for the finalists on March 24. As of April 4, the committee has not announced Leonard's replacement.

Leonard left a huge influence on the lives of musicians and nonmusicians alike and will be missed by many at

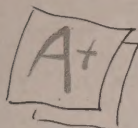
LHS. "Honestly [his retirement] sucks. I found myself to feel very lucky to experience his teaching abilities, but it's definitely sad to see him leave a community he has such a big impact in," Lee said.

Leonard enjoys the day-to-day interactions with students

most. "Watching them change and grow as they learn, mature, make decisions and choices; that is absolutely the best thing about it. And then they are so committed. They make such good music and do such good work," Leonard said. "Everything else is a distant second to that."

HOW TO GET INTO
AN IVY LEAGUE
SCHOOL

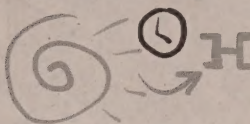
1) EARN GOOD
GRADES



2) EXCEL @
SOMETHING



3) CREATE A RIFT
IN THE SPACE-
TIME
CONTINUUM,
TRAVEL FORWARDS
IN TIME AND
ENSURE YOUR
ADMITTANCE



4) HOPE FOR
THE BEST.

Comic by Max Saltman

Crossword: Spork in the Road

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9
10						11			
12						13			
14						15			
				16					
17	18	19	20						
21						22	23	24	25
26						27			
28						29			
30						31			

Across:

1. Quagga, e.g.
6. Hebrew or Arabic "T"s (var.)
10. Vocal solos, in opera
11. "Water," in Spanish or Portuguese
12. A utensil for scooping and piercing food, and for pitching hay?
14. Look for
15. Boat often made of birch bark
16. "...frickin' sharks with frickin' ____!"
17. Word before "hole" or after "jack"
21. C. S. Lewis' feline Christ figure
22. Utterance of agreement
26. A utensil for scooping and piercing food, and for opening bottles?
28. Lyme-disease carrying arachnid
29. Prefix meaning "large"
30. In telecom, "received" abbrs.
31. Apron-like garment

Down:

1. Shocks, literally
2. Great Lake of canal fame
3. Sink one's teeth into
4. In the opposite direction
5. Campfire remnant
6. Spanish appetizers
7. "Ago," long ago
8. Rage
9. "For goodness ____!"
13. Vocal improvisation
16. Connection
17. Worshipper of Haile Selassie, for short
18. Jell-o, but with meat
19. Impede or inhibit
20. Vocalizes like a dog
22. Rip-off
23. With a bow
24. "Deadpool: The ____ with a Mouth"
25. Adorable *Star Wars* creatures
27. Text-messaging system

Lexington High School wrestlers compete at Division 1 state tournament



Members of the wrestling team pose for a photo during their state tournament. Staff photo by Stephanie Park

■ Brandon Wu
Azalea Yunus
Staff Writers

This year Lexington High School sent four wrestlers to the Division 1 state tournament, hosted in Methuen, Mass.

To qualify for the tour-

namment, the wrestlers had to place in the top four of the Central Section in their weight class at the Division 1 sectionals tournament.

Stephen Willis, Jon Stix, Lucas Aguirre and Jack Marcin placed first, second, fourth and fifth in their respective weight classes. As a result, the qualifying lineup was set

with Marcin coming as an alternate.

This year's success was noteworthy for second-year qualifier Willis, a senior on the team.

"Last year I was the only wrestler who made it past sectionals, so it was much lonelier at States and all states," Willis said. "This year I was

glad to have a sizable group coming up with me."

Though fatigued by the long season, the qualifying wrestlers were well prepared and ready to perform on Feb. 17.

"We were all pretty drained out from making weight, but we were excited, so [we] didn't think much about hunger, cramps and thirst," Aguirre, a junior, said.

The wrestlers competed with some of the state's best wrestlers. Both Willis and Stix finished 3-1 and 3-2 respectively, qualifying for the All-States tournament.

Despite their outstanding performance at the Division 1 state tournament, the two wrestlers knew they had a long way to go. Although Stix saw an early exit from the tournament, Willis was able to make his way to the semifinals, where he battled in a tight match.

"I lost in the semifinals to the highest ranked kid in New England by two [points]," Willis said. "Then [I] got scored on with one second

left in the consolation semifinals, so I lost by one point [in that matchup]." Willis won his next match which meant he placed fifth overall.

Willis finally advanced to the New England tournament, the biggest challenge of the season. He finished with a 1-2 record.

While the wrestlers themselves put in countless hours practicing, many credited the team's success to the supporting cast led by head coach Scott Heinze and assistant coach Michael Huoppi.

"Leading up to the tournament, I had lots of one-on-one time with the coaches," Willis said. "I would have multiple coaches working [on] very specific techniques with me for the entirety of practices."

Willis attributes much of his tournament success to his coaches.

"I had four coaches sitting in my corner screaming and helping me," Willis said. "They helped with my confidence, as I was a little shaky going in against nationally ranked kids."

Numerous spring sports began March 19

■ Ria Bhandarkar
Rachel Zhang
Staff Writers

On March 19, the spring sports season began in full swing with tryouts for numerous different sports. These sports include baseball, softball, lacrosse, outdoor track, tennis, ultimate frisbee and boys volleyball.

Sports play a major role in the Lexington High School community.

Student-athletes undergo rigorous training during the on and off-season to mentally and physically prepare for the season.

"I have to train over the summer to make sure I'm ready for the season. This is always a super arduous process," Peter Lawrence, a se-

nior on the track team, said.

Spring sports offer another opportunity for students to bond and improve in their respective sports. The friendships formed in these sports help to shape the high school experience for new and veteran athletes alike.

"The distance running community at LHS is amazing and from the beginning I have always felt like I was part of the group," Lawrence said.

Although sports can be competitive, they also offer team dynamics which allow students to support each other and have fun.

"Everyone has been really supportive and nice to each other, even the players who just started," Alexa Infelise, a freshman on the ultimate fris-

bee team, said.

The spring season is especially welcoming to freshmen. Compared to the middle schools, LHS sports programs are much more demanding. Students who play spring sports are pushed to their limits through rain or shine.

"At the high school, [sports are] definitely more intense and more of a time commitment. The meets are generally longer and very competitive," Keena Gao, a freshman track runner, said.

Many LHS athletes are excited to continue their year-round athletics during this season. Athletics help students build important leadership qualities, form strong friendships and exercise multiple times a week.

"I'm looking forward to seeing a couple of my track friends that I don't usually get to see and getting back into great shape," Gao said.

For one last season this school year, sports will once again bring students together and foster the competitive spirit of LHS.

SPRING SPORTS AT LHS



baseball
FRESHMAN | JV | VARSITY

lacrosse

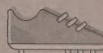
GIRLS FRESHMEN | GIRLS JV | GIRLS VARSITY | BOYS JV | BOYS VARSITY



softball
JV | VARSITY

tennis

GIRLS VARSITY | BOYS VARSITY



ultimate frisbee
GIRLS | BOYS

volleyball

BOYS JV | BOYS VARSITY



outdoor track
GIRLS | BOYS

Graphic created through Canva.com, by Hannah Wang

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